

# A Walk in the Light

1 John Series #2

1 Jn 1:5-10

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## INTRODUCTION

### A. Illustration

I came across a collection of letters that children wrote to Santa Claus. Some of them were pretty good. One said, "Dear Santa, you did not bring me anything good last year. You did not bring me anything good the year before that. This is your last chance. Signed, Alfred."

My favorite went like this: "Dear Santa, there are three little boys who live at our house. There is Jeffrey; he is 2. There is David; he is 4. And there is Norman; he is 7. Jeffrey is good some of the time. David is good some of the time. But Norman is good all of the time. I am Norman."

-- Bruce Thielemann, "Glory to God in the Lowest," Preaching Today, Tape No. 75.

### B. There are a lot of people confused over their relationship with God

1. Some of it comes from our faulty ability to understand God – so we wonder how in the world God can save us and then keep us saved
2. Some of it comes from human theology or philosophy, systems of thought we subscribe to and then try to force God into our mold
3. Some of it is because we know ourselves, and what we know is that we want to be saved from our sins, but our sins seem to follow us everywhere we go, so we wonder how we can ever be saved

### C. Like little Norman, some of us draw some conclusions about sin – at least our sin

1. We enter a state of denial – either about the guilt of sin, or the commission of it
2. There are lots of people who seem to think they don't really have any sins to worry about

### D. Others go to the opposite extreme – they are ever aware of sin, and fear that it is impossible For God to save them since they can't be perfect

### E. The passage to consider this morning will help a great deal

1. It helps us be realistic, not denying the truth about our sins
2. It gives hope because it reminds us of the source of our forgiveness

## I. HERE IS A MESSAGE FOR YOU 1:5

### A. God is light

1. Barclay – “A man’s own character will necessarily be determined by the character of the God whom he worships.”
  - a. if true, then it is vital that we understand the character of God
  - b. only then can we know what our character ought to be
2. That God is light tells us some important things
  - a. it means that God is simply fantastic
    - 1) light is used to put things on display
    - 2) here, God himself is light – glorious, fantastic
  - b. it means that he is open and available to all
    - 1) God isn’t closed or secretive
    - 2) he wants all to see
  - c. it means that God is pure and holy
    - 1) there is not any evil in God
    - 2) light is a perfect description of holiness
  - d. it means that God can show us the way to live
    - 1) light illuminates so we can see where to go
    - 2) he never leads in the way of harm

### B. There is no darkness in God

1. John wanted to make the point both positively and negatively – God is good, pure, righteous, holy and unstained by even the slightest of evil
2. Darkness represents the exact opposite of God
  - a. it is life without Christ
    - 1) Ephesians 5:8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light NASB95
    - 2) Colossians 1:13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, NASB95
    - 3) John 8:12 Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.” NASB95
  - b. it is life without knowledge
    - 1) John 12:35 So Jesus said to them, “For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. NASB95
    - 2) John 12:46 “I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness. NASB95

c. darkness is chaos

1) Genesis 1:2-3 The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. NASB95

2) 2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. NASB95

d. darkness represents the immorality of man without God

1) John 3:19 "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. NASB95

2) Romans 13:12 The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. NASB95

e. darkness represents failure and uselessness

1) Ephesians 5:11 Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; NASB95

2) fruit-bearing plants do not thrive and produce good fruit in the dark

f. darkness is the opposite of love

1) 1 John 2:9-11 The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes. NASB95

2) remove love and you darken the world

g. darkness is where the Lord's enemies are

1) Ephesians 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. NASB95

2) Jude 12-13 These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever. NASB95

### C. Do you hear John's message?

1. God is light – all good, no evil
2. There is no darkness in God – no evil, all good

## II. BEWARE OF THE BIG LIE 1:6-10

### A. The big lie is a denial of sin and its consequences

1. This was most likely aimed directly at the early Gnostics
  - a. they developed multiple views of sin that basically denied it
  - b. some believed they had risen to such a high spiritual state that they did not sin
  - c. others believed that there were no consequences of sin
2. Either way, these people approached life with the view that what they did, how they acted, had no effect or consequence for them
3. John wanted his readers to know that this was a lie

### B. Three times, he identifies this idea as a lie

1. 1:6 – if we say that we have fellowship with God and yet we live like we're still in the darkness, we are lying instead of practicing truth
  - a. light and dark do not mix
  - b. it is impossible to be in a brightly lit place and in total darkness at the same time
  - c. it's not merely a matter of light and dark, but rather what they two represent
    - 1) light is God, all good, pure, absent of all evil
    - 2) darkness is evil, no good at all, completely impure
    - 3) the two are not compatible, but it's not a matter of philosophy or theology, it's a matter of truth – of life, and the reality of sin's consequences
2. 1:8 – if we say we have no sin, there is no truth in us – we end up deceiving ourselves
  - a. Romans 3:10-12 as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE." NASB95
  - b. Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, NASB95
3. 1:10 – if we say we haven't sinned, we make God a liar and his word is not in us
  - a. it's not just that we are liars when we claim to have no sin, or that we've never sinned, it's that we contradict what God said
  - b. if we're right, then God is a liar, and that can't possibly be true

### III. HOW SINFUL MAN CAN FELLOWSHIP THE HOLY GOD

#### A. This is the crux of the matter for John

1. One doesn't have to deny the truth about our sinfulness in order to have fellowship with God, nor is there any reason to develop false doctrines to get what we want
2. God has made it possible for sinful man to enjoy fellowship with him

#### B. Fellowship with God happens when we walk in the light

1. If God is light, then somehow our "walk" or the living of our lives must be in him
  - a. Romans 13:12-14 The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts. NASB95
  - b. 2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. NASB95
  - c. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. "Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you. "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty. NASB95
  - d. Ephesians 5:6-10 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light *consists* in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. NASB95
  - e. 1 Thessalonians 5:4-11 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. But since we are of *the* day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing. NASB95
2. Fellowship with God happens through life that is lived as God lives – a light based life

**C. But, there is still the question: does it mean that man can only have fellowship with God if he is as good as God is?**

1. There certainly seems to be an irreconcilable conflict
  - a. God is light and there is no darkness in him at all
  - b. at best, what we can say about ourselves is that we are sinners and therefore affected by darkness
  - c. is it hopeless to think that we can fellowship God
2. It is not hopeless, but we do need to understand the basis of our fellowship

**D. A walk in the light is very much a matter of the cleansing power of Jesus' blood**

1. It is the blood of Jesus that brings us into the light
  - a. Colossians 1:9-12 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. NASB95
  - b. there is only one thing that "qualifies" us to share in such an inheritance and it is the sacrifice of Jesus that paid the debt of our sins
2. John says, it is the blood of Jesus that keeps us clean
  - a. this isn't a message for those who will turn back to darkness, who carelessly live in sin, and who think that it doesn't matter what they do because they are somehow above sin
  - b. it is a message for imperfect people, who are making the effort to walk in the light, trying to be God's children, wanting to do what is right and good
  - c. these people willing confess their sins and seek God's forgiveness (1:9)
  - d. those people are continually cleansed, made pure and counted righteous
  - e. such people enjoy fellowship both with God and one another

**E. Don't say, "It doesn't matter how we live or what we do."**

1. Such a statement denies the truth about sin
2. Instead, the Christian knows that honest reality brings the blessing of God – we know the truth about ourselves, but through the blood of Jesus, there is continual cleansing

**CONCLUSION**

**A. Are you walking in the light today or are you fooling yourself that sin is no big deal?**

**B. If you are walking in the light, are you confident that sin has been dealt with?**

**C. Invitation**

